

publication date of Fukui et al (April 22, 1999) is about 5 month after the filing date of the priority application of the present invention (November 25, 1998). Thus, Fukui et al is not available as prior art against the present invention. Applicants hereby submit a Certified English Translation of the priority document JP P10-334737, thereby perfecting their claim to priority.

Thus, the rejection over Fukui et al (WO99/19927) is believed to be unsustainable and should be withdrawn.

In addition, Applicants wish to note that MPEP §821.04 states, "if applicant elects claims directed to the product, and a product claim is subsequently found allowable, withdrawn process claims which depend from or otherwise include all the limitations of the allowable product claim will be rejoined." Applicants respectfully submit that should the elected group be found allowable, the non-elected claims 6-15 should be rejoined.

Finally, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner acknowledge that the references cited in the **Information Disclosure Statement**, filed herewith have been considered.

Applicants submit that the present application is now in condition for allowance and
early notice of such action is earnestly solicited.

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Respectfully submitted,

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